

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /079 W
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P R 290930Z JUL 77
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9244
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1137

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, XF, IS, US, JO
SUBJECT: THE WEST BANK ON THE EVE OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT

1. SUMMARY: EARLIER WEST BANK EUPHORIA OVER PROSPECTS
FOR SETTLEMENT HAS BEEN DEFLATED BY BEGIN'S UN-
COMPROMISING STANDS IN WASHINGTON ON WEST BANK, NO
PALESTINIAN STATE AND NO PLO REPRESENTATION AT
GENEVA, PLUS PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT PALESTINIAN
ENTITY SHOULD BE LINKED TO JORDAN. BEGIN'S ACTION
LEGALIZING THREE WB SETTLEMENTS ALSO STRONGLY CRITICIZED.
WEST BANK LEADERS ATTEMPTING TO DRAFT POLICY
DECLARATION FOR SECRETARY WHICH REPORTEDLY (A) REITERATES
PLO REPRESENTS PALESTINIANS; (B) CALLS FOR PLO
PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA; (C) INSISTS ON RETURN TO PRE-
JUNE 5, 1967 BORDERS WITH (IMPLIED) RECOGNITION OF
ISRAEL. DESPITE RECRUDESCENCE OF PESSIMISTIC STRAIN,
WEST BANKERS STILL HOPING PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY
WILL BE ABLE TO BRING ABOUT RECONVENED GENEVA
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CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN LAST THREE DAYS, I HAVE TALKED TO REPRESENT-
ATIVE SPECTRUM OF WEST BANK MAYORS RANGING FROM
HEBRON IN THE SOUTH THROUGH BETHLEHEM AND RAMALLAH
IN THE CENTER TO NABLUS IN THE NORTH. THE EARLIER
EUPHORIA THAT WE REPORTED (JERUSALEM 856) HAS EVAPORATED

AS RESULT OF WEST BANK PERCEPTION THAT BEGIN IN WASHINGTON DID NOT CHANGE HIS HARDLINE VIEWS ON ANY OF ISSUES NEAREST TO PALESTINIANS (E.G. WEST BANK, NO INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE, NO PLO REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA). WEST BANKERS ALSO UNHAPPY OVER PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT PALESTINIAN ENTITY SHOULD NOT BE INDEPENDENT BUT SHOULD BE LINKED TO JORDAN.

3. MAYOR QAWASIMA OF HEBRON WAS STILL OPTIMISTIC. HE BELIEVED PRESIDENT'S DESCRIPTION OF BEGIN'S POSITION AS "FORTHCOMING" MIGHT REFLECT PRIVATE ASSURANCES HE RECEIVED FROM BEGIN PERSONALLY. (HE WAS ALSO BUOYED BY ERRONEOUS PRESS REPORTS CONCERNING CARTER-BEGIN AGREEMENT ON MORATORIUM ON SETTLEMENTS WHICH HE SAW AS EVIDENCE BEGIN SINCERE IN SEARCH FOR PEACE.)

4. QAWASIMA STRESSED NECESSITY FOR PALESTINIANS TO BE PRESENT AT GENEVA. IF NOT, PALESTINIANS, WOULD REJECT THE VERY OUTCOME THAT THEY WOULD HAVE ACCEPTED HAD THEY BEEN A PARTY TO ITS FORMULATION. HE RAISED POSSIBILITY OF PLO DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPRESENTING PALESTINIANS TO CERTAIN WEST BANK MAYORS. SEVERAL MAYORS (SELECTED BY THE PLO) COULD THEN PARTICIPATE AS MEMBERS OF A UNITED ARAB DELEGATION. RABIN GOVERNMENT, HE NOTED, HAD ACCEPTED IDEA WB LEADERS COULD REPRESENT PALESTINIANS' CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERESTS. HOWEVER, CONGEN OBSERVED, RABIN GOVERNMENT PREPARED HAVE WEST BANKERS PARTICIPATE AS MEMBERS OF JORDANIAN DELEGATION. THIS WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE, THE MAYOR SAID. CONGEN DOUBTED PLO, AFTER RABAT AND UN DECISIONS, COULD AGREE DEPUTIZE WB MAYORS. IN THAT CASE, QAWASIMA THOUGHT ARAB STATES AT MEPC COULD SETTLE ISSUES SUCH AS BORDERS AND PEACE, AND PALESTINIANS COULD BE BROUGHT IN AT LATER STAGE WHEN PRESSURES FROM ARAB STATES TO ADOPT MODERATE POSITIONS WOULD BE GREAT.

5. MAYOR GAVE USUAL WEST BANK PITCH ON NECESSITY FOR INDEPENDENT PALESTINE PRIOR TO ESTABLISHMENT OF LINKS WITH JORDAN. QAWASIMA STRONGLY SUPPORTED IDEA OF INTERIM REGIME (ARAB LEAGUE OR UN) AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. AS FOR HUSSEIN'S SUGGESTION FOR A REFERENDUM, THIS DEPENDED ON WHAT QUESTION OR QUESTIONS WERE ASKED.

6. ON PEACE, QAWASIMA WAS MOST FORTHCOMING. RESTITUTION OF POLITICAL RIGHTS TO PALESTINIANS WOULD NOT ONLY PERMIT COEXISTENCE BETWEEN ISRAEL

AND PALESTINIAN HOMELAND BUT BETWEEN ARABS AND
JEWS IN HEBRON.

7. MAYOR FREIJ OF BETHLEHEM WAS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY
GLOOMY. HE THOUGHT BEGIN IN WASHINGTON HAD FORECLOSED
POSSIBILITY OF DIPLOMATIC PROGRESS. FREIJ CONFIRMED
MAYORS WORKING ON POLICY STATEMENTS ALONG LINES
SUMMARIZED ABOVE WHICH THEY HOPE TO HAVE READY BEFORE
AUGUST 7. PLO, HE SAID, WAS ONLY CREDIBLE REPRESENTATIVE
OF PALESTINIANS. WEST BANKERS ARE TOO WEAK TO PERFORM
THIS FUNCTION, HE SAID. MAYOR REVEALED HE HAVING TROUBLE
WITH MILGOV OVER SOME OF HIS RECENT STATEMENTS.

8. "RADICIAL RAMALLAH" LIVED UP TO ITS REPUTATION WITH
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MAYOR KHALAF AND DEPUTY MAYOR RANTISI DELIVERING BITTER
CRITIQUES OF US POLICY AS ANTI-PALESTINIAN AND 100 PERCENT PRO-
ISRAEL. AFTER UNBURDENING THEMSELVES, KHALAF CLUNG TO HOPE US
IN ITS OWN SELF INTEREST WOULD FORCE ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW.
HOWEVER, KHALAF STRESSED PALESTINIANS PREPARED TO LIVE
IN PEACE WITH ISRAEL WITHIN 1967 BORDERS. CONGEN
SOUGHT REPEATEDLY TO SET RECORD STRAIGHT BUT
FRANKLY DOUBTS KHALAF AND CO. WERE REALLY
LISTENING. RAMALLAH MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
EXPERIENCING GREAT DIFFICULTY WITH MILGOV,
KHALAF AND RANTISI COMPLAINED.

9. NABLUS MAYOR SHAKA' WAS PESSIMISTIC. HE MADE
SAME POINTS AS QAWASIMA AND FREIJ. PLO AND ONLY
THE PLO, COULD SPEAK FOR PALESTINIANS, HE STRESSED.
PRESIDENT'S STATEMENTS ON LINK WITH JORDAN
AMOUNTED TO BEHIND-THE-SCENES CARTER-HUSSEIN-BEGIN
DEAL AT PALESTINIANS EXPENSE. BEGIN'S ACTION TO
LEGALIZE WB SETTLEMENTS MEANT EITHER CARTER AND BEGIN
TACITLY AGREED ON THIS STEP OR AMERICANS TRULY
DISAPPOINTED BUT BEGIN FELT STRONG ENOUGH TO DEFY
THEM. SHAKA' NOTED WITH IRONY SECRETARY NOT PLANNING
TO MEET WITH ARAFAT ON HIS TRIP. US CONCEDED
PALESTINIANS WERE THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM YET
REFUSED TO TALK TO THE PALESTINIANS WHO WERE ONLY
ONES QUALIFIED TO DECIDE THEIR FUTURE. WHEN CONGEN
GAVE HIS VIEW PRESIDENT HAD NOT ALTERED HIS POSITION
ON FUNDAMENTALS, SHAKA' SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO THINK
THIS WAS SO.

10. SHAKA' WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH DIFFICULTIES HE
EXPERIENCING WITH MILGOV OVER ELECTRICITY GENERATING
CAPACITY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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To: STATE
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